



Workforce Safety & Insurance

Putting safety to work

Enterprise Application Development Technology Business Case

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WSI Future Enterprise Development Business Case

Project Overview

There are currently three J2EE applications in production at WSI. It has taken a team of five to six people plus consultants to build these three applications in about two years' time. Development has been slow. These three applications are built on a custom framework that is based on EJB technology. Within the past two years, several open-source frameworks have emerged. Also, many experts are discovering that development with EJB is slow and that there are better approaches to developing enterprise applications. Additionally, ND Legislation has mandated that ITD host all Web Services. WSI's IT Planning group decided it was time to take a step back in an effort to verify that WSI is making the right choices relative to the future direction of enterprise application development at WSI.

Business Need

WSI, as a monopolistic state fund, is a minority in the workers' compensation industry. While this is a model which has served the citizens of ND very well, there is increasing pressure from private insurers to enter this market. If WSI is to meet these challenges, it is imperative that WSI offer enterprise applications that have become industry standard and have proven rich functionality to streamline interactions, create efficiencies, and enable our customers to better manage their workers' compensation responsibilities.

Solution

WSI believes that the decision on which enterprise application development products and services to use is a decision that will impact the entire organization. It is important to enlist the support of a recognized industry expert vendor to: recommend the product suite to use for development and testing, assist WSI architects with establishing an underlying architecture, and train WSI developers and testers in the chosen products and architecture. The goal is to enable WSI development and testing staff to function independently with the products and architecture established.

WSI has located a qualified vendor to provide products and services for enterprise application development by means of a Proof of Concept project. Compuware Corporation passed a Proof of Concept and will provide enterprise application development and testing products, architectural services, mentoring services, and training services to WSI. The products and architecture proposed by Compuware are robust enough to handle future development for internal and external applications at WSI.

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Fit with WSI's Mission

WSI's vision is to provide quality, comprehensive workers' compensation products and services. The goal of a new enterprise development platform is to give WSI the ability to create new web based applications much more quickly than has been done in the past. In order to facilitate this vision and goal, the information services staff of WSI must have access to top quality development products and services.

Project Approach

WSI went through an RFP process in order to choose Compuware Corporation as the vendor that can provide the best enterprise application solution for WSI. WSI will purchase a suite of Compuware products for enterprise application development. Compuware will then provide training and mentoring personnel to equip WSI IT staff with the skills necessary to use the Compuware suite of products to independently produce high-quality enterprise applications. The training and mentorship period will be from February 21st, 2005 through July 8th, 2005.

Project Assumptions

The following assumptions can be made with regard to this project:

- Assumption #1 – The current technology being used for Java web application development is not the technology required to move forward for future web application development because of the custom underlying framework and EJB technologies it is built upon.
- Assumption #2 – All production applications must be hosted in ITD's WebSphere environment
- Assumption #3 – WSI has a budget to support the costs associated with this project.
- Assumption #4 – WSI development, testing, project management, and business staff will be made available to support this project.
- Assumption #5 - Executive support is critical to the successful completion of this project. WSI's executive team understands the importance of this project and is in support of the effort.

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Project risks

Project risks are characteristics, circumstances, or features of the project environment that may have an adverse affect on the project or the quality of its deliverables. Known risks identified with this project have been included below:

Risk	Level (H/M/L)	Risk Plan
Changing technology directions always comes with a level of risk.	M	By going through an RFP process that included a Proof of Concept Phase, WSI has located a company that WSI is very certain will provide the products and services necessary to accomplish the project's objectives.
Throughout this project, WSI developers will be tied up with supporting this project. This means that maintenance of existing applications will continue but creation of new applications or application features will be limited.	M	WSI will inform their staff that internal application enhancements and development of new applications will be limited until this project is complete. Also, the result of this project will be some new applications.
Any of the WSI required resources are made unavailable during the project.	M	The executive team has assigned a high priority to this project. That priority level will be supported by WSI.

Benefit Analysis

The benefits of this effort for WSI and their customers are:

- Working with a top vendor to establish products, create a stable underlying architecture, and train internal staff will enable faster development. The ability to create new web based applications in less time will benefit WSI and its' customers.
- WSI customers benefit from this project in the following ways:
 - Convenience of doing business online 24 hours per day/365 days a year.
 - Safety promotion in the workplace by reporting claims faster. Studies show that the sooner a claim is reported, the sooner the injured worker returns to work.
 - Online account management.
- WSI internal application system users benefit in the following ways:
 - Streamlining of internal processes through efficient software applications.
 - External customers doing more support of themselves online.

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- More automated processes for job simplification.
- WSI's internal IS staff benefits in the following ways:
 - Currently, WSI's development staff is split in the technologies they develop. The client/server developers are developing in PowerBuilder. The web application development team is using J2EE tools and technologies. Both technologies come with a cost. Combining the development environment into one will save in tool and training costs.
 - A larger knowledge-base to draw from if all the developers know the same technology.
 - WSI's hardware and network support staff is supporting two different technology platforms. Combining technology platforms will require less training of and support from this team; that is already stretched very thin.
 - Developing in a robust, industry accepted technology puts more resources at the tips of developer's fingers, which augments internal efficiency.

Cost Estimate

The final purchase of products, implementation of services, and ongoing support will cost WSI \$478,030.